

Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

COMBINED MEETING: FAMILY SUPPORT AND PARENT EDUCATION WORK GROUPS

October 4, 2005 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
<p>Members Present: James Abson, Elaine Davis, Deborah Gangluff, Jacqueline Gorton, Martha Hiatt, Sylvia Hunter, Traci Johnston, Nick Long, Sherri Jo McLemore, Kenneth W. Meyers, Gwen Paul, Martha Reeder, J. B. Robertson, Kathy Robinson, Danique Smith, Kathy Stegall, and Paula C. Watson.</p> <p>Regrets: Becky Hall, Suzann Hernandez, Pamela Kahler, Howard Knoff, Ginny Kurrus, Sorita Rusher, Linda Russell, Lori Satterwhite, Susan Simmons, Kathleen Stafford, and Nancy Yarbrough,</p> <p>Resigned from Work Group: Dawn Purifoy</p>
<p>Agenda Item #1: Call to Order – Purpose Overview – Quality Rating System Update</p> <p>Discussion: Jacqueline Gorton called the meeting to order and she and Barbara Gilkey welcomed the group to the meeting. Those in attendance made self-introductions. Jackie reviewed the handouts and related their connection to this meeting.</p> <p>Purpose Overview. Martha Reeder provided an explanation of the purpose for the two work groups meeting together in a combined session. She mentioned that Medical Home and Social-Emotional Health Work Groups began meeting together in June because many of their goals were related to each other or closely connected. The goals of both groups are inter-related; therefore, working together can aid both groups in accomplishing their goals.</p> <p>One of the objectives for all work groups is to produce some concrete recommendations for the Early Care and Education Work Group. Included in the handouts is a draft of Medical Home and Social-Emotional Health recommendations which will be referred directly to the QRS sub-group. The QRS sub-group has requested a similar slate of recommendations from the Family Support and Parent Education Work Groups.</p> <p>Explanation of QRS. When the groups first came together, they dreamed of what could be if all the resources in the world were available. Goals were identified, and work began on making them happen. As the Early Care and Education group looked at the reality of putting into place a “tiered” structure, all the work groups saw that as a way to embed some of their goals in the early childhood systems.</p> <p>At the present time, there are two levels in the system: (1) Basic Compliance and (2) Quality Approval. There is a big gap between the two levels. The tiered structure provides a pathway to get from basic</p>

Agenda Item #1, Continued: Quality Rating System Update

Discussion: compliance to a higher quality. Arkansas received a perfect score with regard to quality in early care and education. We already have a high level of quality, but it is not available equally to everyone. In this initiative, we are working to build a better system.

The Early Care and Education Work Group looked at what other states are doing and brought in experts to help make this happen. There are ten states who have plans in place. The Early Care and Education Work Group chose representatives from nine entities from the larger group to write the proposed plan, with each entity being given one vote. This small group is going step by step through the process.

One decision that has already been made is that there will be five tiers in the system. The sub-group has looked at how to construct the system from two possible systems: the "point" system and the "building block" system. The sub-group decided that the "building block" system will work best for Arkansas rather than the "point" system because the quality may be uneven in the "point" system. An approach that requires basic components on each level, but also allows choice of additional components is being considered. This would allow programs more flexibility.

The QRS sub-group decided what components are going to be judged. There are five or six states with similar structure, and the sub-group is studying those states to see what they are doing. At the last meeting, the QRS sub-group decided on the following performance measures:

- ✍ **Licensing Compliance**
- ✍ **Staff Qualification and Professional Development**
 - ? Professional Development
 - ? Education
- ✍ **Learning Environment (ECERS / ITERS)**
 - ? Literacy
 - ? Teaching interactions
 - ? Child Assessment
 - ? Equipment & materials
 - ? Transitioning
- ✍ **Program Evaluation**
- ✍ **Parent/Family/Community (Collab.)**
 - ? Parent Involvement Plans
 - ? Resources for Family Support
 - ? Support system for child's Medical Home needs
- ✍ **Group Size - Staff/Child Ratios**
- ✍ **Administrative Policies and Procedures (Excluded—cannot exceed)**
- ✍ **Staff Compensation**

A standard needs some accountability. It is better to think of and include from the beginning than at a later time. In Arkansas, we have the environmental rating scale that is very good, but ERS will not supply accountability for all performance measures.

Agenda Item #1, Continued: Quality Rating System Update

Discussion: Anyone interested in finding out more about the process can go to the website. All minutes and research are posted on the website: www.arkansas.gov/childcare/qrs.htm.

Many of the providers are quite anxious about the process. They are afraid that they are going to be asked to do some things for which they are not equipped. They are afraid of being branded. They are concerned about the financial costs to their centers.

Barbara Gilkey presented the Head Start information related to parent involvement.

The performance measures (or construct) were borrowed from the PTA materials and parallel Head Start performance measures. Small groups of two or three were formed to work on individual performance measures during lunch. The assignment was to determine what the standard should be and the measurement piece for each star. The performance measures identified are:

- ✍ **Communication** - it is regular, two-way and meaningful
- ✍ **Parenting Skills** - are promoted and supported
- ✍ **Student Learning** - parents play an integral role in assisting student learning
- ✍ **Volunteering** - parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought
- ✍ **Decision-Making/Advocacy** - parents are full partners in decisions that affect school, families and student learning.
- ✍ **Community Collaboration** - community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Agenda Item #2: Parent Survey Results - AECA Conference

Discussion: Jackie reported on the Parent Survey. There are about 15-18 programs participating in the SFI Network. At the AECA pre-conference session, the programs in the Network are coming together for the first time. We were hoping that we would have the results from these survey by now, but they are still not in to us from the Network. Some of them are being delivered later today and the results will be tabulated using a Scantron. Plans need to be made related to using the results to help develop the toolkit. We want to learn from the Network members how they work with parents. Some of their ideas may become part of the toolkit.

The work groups are working on developing two items at the same time--the toolkit and the QRS. The toolkit will be multifaceted. It may be print materials as well as on-line materials.

Agenda Item #3: Breakout Groups - Lunch

Discussion: During lunch until 1:30 p.m. the work groups broke into small groups, 2 or 3 each, to work on the grid. Following this, the group re-convened. The raw data was collected. It will be transcribed and sent out by the AECCS office so that everyone will have a chance to read before the next meeting. At the next meeting the document will be finalized for submission to the Early Care and Education QRS sub-group. The sub-group will be ready to receive by that time. Martha will compile and circulate them back to the work groups. She is not going to edit what everyone has done.

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Agenda Item #4: Wrap up and Next Steps

Discussion: There are some things that are work group specific. Parent Education may want to meet again. The Parent Education Coordinating Board idea needs to be developed. It needs to be part of the system through the state.

The Family Support Work Group may want to work on Universal Application. Martha Reeder saw two presentations on this type of system during the grantee meeting in September. DHHS may be ready to do something like this. Martha is in the process of trying to get information together to give to Dick Hyatt and Tim Lampe.

It was suggested that the work group meet separately at the next meeting before the combined groups meet together.

Martha also reported that the Early Care and Education Work Group is developing a Public Relations campaign related to, "What is Quality?"

The goal for the final report is March, 2006. We need to begin writing the plan very soon.

Next Meeting Date: October 24, 2005, 1-3 p.m. at the Cox Creative Center in Little Rock.

RESULTING TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Martha Reeder will compile and circulate the performance measures back to the work groups.

The work groups will review and be prepared to discuss at the October 24 meeting.

Jackie Gorton will report on the Parent Survey and Center Survey at the next meeting.